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ROBERT NIXON.

J. S. Unwin Clarke

NIXON'S
CHESHIRE PROPHECIES

Reprinted and Edited from the best sources.

AND

INCLUDING A COPY OF THE PROPHECY FROM AN
UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT,

WITH AN

Introductory Essay on Popular Prophecies.



MANCHESTER :

ABEL FRYWOOD & SON, 56 AND 58, OLDHAM STREET.

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P R E F A C E .

THE present is a re-issue of the collection of NIXON'S PROPHECIES put forth in 1873, and forming the first attempt to present a complete and accurate edition of those curious documents. In reprinting, the opportunity has been taken of amplification and emendation. The present edition will be found to contain a version of the Prophecy not hitherto printed. For this the publishers have to thank the courteous liberality of Dr. KENDRICK, of Warrington, who has allowed them to make a transcript of his manuscript. Those who care for Cheshire antiquities, and those who are interested in popular Prophecies will, it is hoped, find the present issue adequate and satisfactory.

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INTRODUCTION.

It is Cicero who says "I know of no nation whatever, however civilised and learned, or however barbarous and savage, which does not believe it possible that future events may be indicated, and understood, and predicted, by certain persons." It is certain that in every age there have been persons either claiming, or credited with a mysterious power of foreseeing the future course of events. Amongst the ancients prophecy was in high repute, and very remarkable instances of the fulfilment of prophecy are given by the classical writers.

In many of the ancient prophecies, an ambiguity in the terms led to the expectation of a different event from that by which it was fulfilled. It was announced to Cambyses that he would die at Ecbatana, by which he understood the celebrated Median city, whereas he really ended his days at an out-of-the-way Ecbatana in Syria.*

It was a belief of the ancient world that the immediate approach of death cleared the spiritual vision, and gave a foresight of the things which were to be. So Homer makes Patroclus prophecy the death of Hector, and

* Many instances of such ambiguous prophecies, both ancient and modern, have been collected. See "Notes and Queries," second series, iv. 201, 277; vii. 397. In Wanley's "Wonders of the Little World," 1697, b. iv., c. iv., there is a long list of ancient and modern false or ambiguous predictions.

Hector predict that of Achilles, and so Jacob, when he feels his end approaching, calls his sons together to hear that which should befall them. Socrates, Pythagoras, Xenophon, Diodorus Siculus, Sextus Empiricus, S. Gregory, Tertullian, all appear to have held this opinion.*

Both in ancient and modern days it has been esteemed good policy on the part of governments to prohibit prophecies, for predictions have sometimes a tendency to cause their own fulfilment. One who believes himself predestined to greatness will be on the look-out for opportunities of attaining it, and will probably not always be over scrupulous as to the means. An ambitious fatalist may easily become dangerous in any state of society. Prophecies bearing Merlin's name are of great antiquity. Giraldus Cambrensis mentions them as old in his days.†

* See "Notes and Queries" ii. 116, 435; xi. 550, where most of the passages referred to above are given in full. See also an extremely interesting paper in Sir Henry Hallford's *Essays* (3rd edition, 1842, p. 87).

† Concerning Merlin the reader may consult the introduction to the "*Romance of Merlin*," published by the Early English Text Society; Turner's "*History of the Anglo-Saxons*," iii., 578. The common collection of the prophecies bears the following title: "*The Life and Prophecies of Merlin, surnamed Ambrosius; with his Predictions interpreted* (by Thomas Heywood). London, 1813." In the last century a dispute arose as to the right of way through Richmond Park, and this gave rise to a now very rare book, entitled "*Merlin's Life and Prophecies, who flourished in the fifth century, and foretold the Fates and Fortunes of all the Kings and Queens that have sat on the British throne, from Vortigern down to his present Majesty. His prediction relating to the late contest about the Rights of Richmond Park, with some other events relating thereto not yet come to pass, but no less wonderful than those that have already happened.*" London, 1755."

The memory of Arthur was cherished, and the return of the hero who personified the national aspirations was looked for centuries after the knight was dust and his good sword rust. This faith was shared by all the remnants of the Cynric race. The prophecies which embodied these hopes played an important part in the struggle between England and Scotland.

St. Malachi was born in 1094, and became Archbishop of Armagh in 1127. To him is attributed a prophecy of the Popes, which has not been without believers even amongst learned Catholic writers ; but is now generally regarded as having been forged about 1590 by an adherent of Cardinal Simoncelli, in the then pending papal election.* It consists of a series of mottoes, each designating a particular Pope ; thus Martin V. is typified by the words "Erigitur Colonna fortis," his family name being Colonna. The "Blessed Joachim," a well-known mediæval prophet, was born in 1111, in the Kingdom of Naples, but his prophecies were not collected for about 150 years after his death. In an interview with Richard Coeur de Lion, he warned him against prosecuting his expedition into Palestine, and predicted many things which did *not* happen, amongst others, the slaughter of all the Catholic priests in 1297 ! But it is now thought that the prophecies bearing the name of Joachim are the work of some Franciscan who lived at the end of the fifteenth century.†

* "Biographie Universelle," xxiv. 264 ; "Notes and Queries," 4th series, viii. 113, 296, and the references there given.

† "Biographie Universelle," xxi. 566.

The fame of Thomas Lermouth, the Rhymer of Ercildoun, has for some centuries been in the mouths of Scotchmen. The day before the death of King Alexander III. he told the Earl of March that before the next noon such a tempest should blow as Scotland had not felt for many years. Next morning, being a clear, bright day, the Earl taunted "true Thomas" with the falsity of his prophecy; but when the news came of the King's sudden death, it was seen that that was the storm which he had foretold. It is difficult to fix the date of the Rhymer's prophetic power. A person of his name was alive in 1286. Dr. Murray thinks the prophecy was manufactured just before the battle of Bannockburn to put confidence into the dispirited patriots of Scotland. The earliest version known dates about 1400, and makes the Scots win in the battle of Halidon Hill with the slaughter of 6,000 Englishmen, while the other texts, wise after the event, make the Scots lose, as they actually did.*

One of the best known of the prophecies of the Rhymer preserved by oral tradition will recall a well-known passage in Nixon, and it appears that about the end of the last century there was a person named Douglas, who had an excrescence which was recognised as a third thumb, and who was thought by the superstitious to be the man of the hour foretold by the prophet.

In 1603 Waldegrave, the Edinburgh printer, issued the "Whole Prophetie of Scotland,

* See "The Romance and Prophecies of Thomas of Ercildoun," edited by James A. H. Murray, LL.D. (E. E. T. S., 1875).

England, and some part of France and Denmark, prophesied bee meruellous Merling, Beid, Bertlingtoun, Thomas Rymour, Waldhaue, Eltraine, Banester, and Sibbilla, all according in one."* These appear to date from the earlier part of the fifteenth century. Some of the passages occur in many popular prophecies, and will be found in Nixon not less than in Rymer.

The verses attributed to Bede contain a chronogram of the year 1480! It is clear that trifling differences of dates were not thought of much importance.

John Bridlington, called also "Brydlyngton" and "Bertlington," was an Augustine canon of that ilk in Yorkshire, and died in 1379. The "*carmina vaticinalia*" attributed to him include the well-known "Cock of the North" prophecy.

"Waldhaue" is intended for "St. Waltheof," or "Waldhave," Abbot of Melrose in

* This very curious volume was reprinted by the Bannatyne Club, in 1833. A much earlier version has been printed by the Early English Text Society, from a MS. in the Cambridge University Library. ("*Bernardus de curâ rei Famularis*, with some early Scottish prophecies." Edited by J. Rawson Lumby, M.A. 1870.) Another of these early metrical prophecies which has a great resemblance to those just named is printed in "Notes and Queries," 4th series, iv. 81. The fullest elucidation of this obscure part of the subject is that given by Dr. Murray, to which we have already referred. See also "Ballads from Manuscripts," edited by F. J. Furnivall (London, 1872, vol. i., p. 316), for two prophecies in rhyme on the state of England, having a very general resemblance to the above-named collection. Mr. Furnivall prints also a piece of prophetic doggerel, headed "Jhesu," about which he very candidly and judiciously says, "I can make nothing of this prophecy."

the 12th century—a man whose biography is made up of marvels which a sceptical age cannot tolerate or believe.

On the birth of his son, Henry V. is said to have exclaimed, "God Lord ! I, Henry of Monmouth, shall small time reign and much get; and Henry born at Windsor shall long time reign and lose all; but God's will be done."

The discovery of the New World brought to light some old prophecies, for amongst the ancient Mexicans we are told that there had been for centuries predictions of a new race who would seize their fatherland.* The discovery of America is indeed supposed to have been foretold by Seneca.†

Michel Nostradamus, in 1555, published three hundred prophetical quatrains, one of which was supposed to contain an allusion to the death of Henry II. of France.‡ His reputation was such that the king declared that all enemies of the physician should be reckoned as his own. There are many modern events which his admirers claim him to have foretold, but it is at least curious to find, in a work published in 1598, the following verse :—

Gand et Bruxelles marcheront contre Anvers ;
Sénat de Londres mettront à mort leur Roi :
 Le sel et le sin lui seront à l'envers,
 Pour eux avoir regnè en desarroi.

* Howitt's "History of the Supernatural," 1863, i. 397.

† Hakewill's "Apologie," 1630, p. 249.

‡ Henry II.'s death has indeed been said to have been predicted by Gaurico and Cardan, and the narrative appeared to rest on good foundations, yet it is certain that neither of those fortune-tellers had any premonition of the event. ("Notes and Queries," 2nd series, iv. 353.)

The execution of Charles I. was very naturally said to be foreshadowed in the second line.*

John Stoflerus predicted a great deluge to take place in 1524. His prophecy excited great terror. President Auriol, of Toulouse, built four high pillars, with a boat on the top of them. This, however, he had no occasion to use, as the weather was both fine and dry. The same astrologer fixed the end of the world at 1586.† A descendant of this man is said to have inherited his prophetic spirit. Margareta Stoffell, or Stoffler, who in 1847 is reported to have predicted that between that date and 1856 Louis Phillippe would lose his crown, and for a short time the working classes have power in their hands, but lose it during foreign war. After much confusion a Conservative party would grasp the reins, and a certain prince would lose his life in attempting to erect a throne. Spain and Portugal, after much civil war, would unite as the Pyrenean Republic. The American and Asiatic dominions of Britain would assert their independence, and her navy be destroyed in a great sea fight. The Austrians would be driven out of Italy, and Rome again become its capital. Germany would be the scene of a great civil war, in which remote Eastern nations would be invited to aid him, by a German monarch. These barbarians would be defeated, and a great city of the

* See "Les Propheties de M. Michel Nostradamus." Lyon, 1698, 12mo., "Varia, by J. Hain Friswell," Lond. 1866, 8vo. "Biographie Universelle," Paris, 1822, t. xxxi.

† "Recreative Review," 1821, i. 200.

fatherland be burned to the ground, and its site sown with salt. Poland would rise, and the Vistula have upon its banks corpses enough to feed all the ravens of the world for a full century. Denmark, Sweden, and Norway would combine as a Scandinavian Republic, and the Russian power be overthrown by a combination of the powers in a battle which would be the greatest and the last the world should see. After this the Kingdom of God upon earth. The only account of this prophecy I have met with is in "All the Year Round" (N. S., vii. 375). Even if it was published in 1847—which I greatly doubt—it cannot be looked upon as very successful guessing.

Michel Stifelius preached a sermon in which the end of the world was announced for a certain day in 1533, and at the time he had fixed a violent storm arose, which made people feel certain that he had said sooth. But when the storm passed over, and the brave old world looked all the fairer for it, the people, in a rage, dragged him from his pulpit, and almost ended him. That the end of the world had not come seems a strange reason for half-murdering a grave divine.*

The fondness of the English for prophecies was a matter of early remark, and is satirically alluded to by Philip de Comines. Such sayings as

'Twixt Lapham forde and Shimpling thorne
England shall be wonne and lorne.†

* "Recreative Review," 1821, i. 200.

† "Notes and Queries," 3rd edition, xii. 479.

And

When all England is aloft,
Weel are they that are in Christ's Croft ;
And where shud Christ's Croft be,
But between Ribble and Mersee.*

have always been current. Lord Bacon speaks of a trivial prophecy which he heard in his childhood, when "Queen Elizabeth was in the flower of her years—

When hempe is spun
England's done.

Whereby it was generally conceived that after the princes had reigned which had the principal letters of that word *hempe* (which were Henry, Edward, Mary, Philip, and Elizabeth), England should come to utter confusion, which, thanks be to God, is verified in the change of the name, for the king's style is now no more of England but of Britain." He mentions another prophecy generally supposed to point at the sailing of the Spanish Armada :—

There shall be seen upon a day,
Between the Baugh and the May,
The black fleet of Norway.†
When that is come and gone,
England build houses of lime and stone,
For after war shall you have none.

Regiomontanus, the famous astronomer, is said to have left an allusion—

Octogesimus octavus mirabilis annus.

which was supposed to point to the same event.

Bacon, in the essay we have above quoted, alludesto the legislative prohibition of prophecy, and it is a fact that predictions have been the

* Hollingworth's "*Mancuniensis*."

† "The King of Spain's surname, as they say, is Norway."—*Bacon*.

subject of several English Acts of Parliament. Thus by a statute passed in the fifth year of Elizabeth's reign, all persons are forbidden to set forth "any fond, fantastical, or false prophecy, upon or by occasion of any arms, fields, beasts, badges, or such other like things accustomed in arms, cognizances, or signets, or upon, or by reason of any time, year, or day, name, bloodshed or war."

David Upan, or Unanthy's "prophecy" about Charing Cross. is said to have been printed in 1588:—

To tell the truth, many one would wonder,
Charing Cross shall be broken asunder:

P shall Preach,
R shall Reach,
S shall Stand stiff.

"R signifies Roundhead, P Presbytery, S the Soldier," &c.*

Aubrey tells us that during the civil wars Mr. Leonard Morehouse rescued from the tailor's shears an ancient Latin MS., in which the events of those troublous times were foretold. He gave it to Seth Ward, the Bishop of Salisbury, and Aubrey saw it himself in 1649.

William Tyndal—not the famous reformer, but "poor Vicar of Welling"—is said to have written, about the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, a prophecy of the civil wars.†

Amongst the Scottish reformers there were not wanting persons believed to have prophetic powers. George Wishart is supposed to have foretold his own death by the agency of Cardinal

* "Miraculous Prophecies." v.

† Aubrey's "Miscellanies."

Beaton, and in the midst of the flames he prophesied that the proud prelate who watched his tortures should himself in a few days die ignominiously in the place where he rested to see the execution. And in effect the Cardinal was hung from the window whence he had looked forth upon the death of the reformer.*

William Lilly, the famous astrologer, published several prophetic works, one of the most famous of them being the Prophecy of the White King, of which he gives the Latin text and a long explanation of his own. He gives also an early English translation of it.

“ THE WHITE KING’S PROPHECIE.

Englised long since, as by the stile appeares.

“ When the Lyon of Rightfulnesse is dead, there shall rise a White King in *Brittaine*, first Flying, and after Riding, after Liggig down; and in this ligge down he shall be lymed, after that he shall be led. And there shall be shewed whether there be an other King: Then shall be gadred togider much folke, and he shall take helpe for him: And then there shall be Merchandise of men (as of an Horse, or an Oxe:) And there shall be sought helpe, and there shall none arise, but bed for head: And then shall one gone, theere the Sunne ariseth, another there the Sunne gown downe: After this, it shall be said by *Brittaine* (King is King) King is no King. After this he shall raise up his head, (and he shall be taken him to be a

* “ Howitt ” ii. 85.

king, be many things to done, But wise men
 Reading, And then shall a range of GleeDs,
 and that ever each hath beraveing, he shall
 have it for his owne, And this shall last seven
 yeeres, Loe raveing and shedding of bloud :
 And Ovens shall be made like Kyrkes, And
 that as one sows another shall reape, and
 death shall be better then wretched life, and
 Charity shall be of few men ; After then shall
 come through the South with the Sunne, on
 Horse of tree, and upon all waves on the Sea,
 the Chicken of the Eagle sailing into *Brittaine*,
 and arriving anon, to the house of the Eagle,
 he shall shew fellowship to them beasts. After
 a yeare and a halfe shall be warre in *Brittaine*,
 then shall a sooth be naught worth, and every
 man shall keepe his thing, and gotten other men's
 goods. " After the white King feeble shall goe to-
 wards the West, betlipped about with his folke,
 to the old place been running water, then his
 enemies shall meet him, and march in her
 place shall be ordained about him in Hoast,
 on the manner of a shield shall be formed, then
 shall they fighten on Oven front, After the white
 King shall into a Kirke-yard over a Hall. After
 the Chicken of the Eagle shall nestle in the
 highest Rooch of all *Brittaine*, nay he shall
 naught be slain young : nay he naught come
 old, for then the Gentle worthines shall naught
 suffer wrong be done to him, But when the
 Realme is in peace then shall he die, and two
 yeeres after shall come a new Rule from Heaven
 and setle holy Kirke as hit shall ever more
 stand, and bring three Countries into one,
England, Scotland, and IVales, unto the day of

doome and the Holy Crosse be brought into Christian mens hands, and there shall be made a Temple that never was made, such none.

The Originall hereof was found by the Lady Poston of the County of Norfolke, amongst the evidences of Edw. the fourth his time."

The fire and plague of London were foretold by many persons—amongst them, Thomas Reeve, in a sermon printed in 1657. Humphrey White, a Quaker, in a pamphlet printed in 1660, describing a "Vision which he saw concerning London," describes in a striking manner the burning and desolation which so soon after fell upon the great city. Daniel Baker, in 1659, wrote: "A fire, a consuming fire, shall be kindled in the bowels of the earth, which will scorch with burning heat all hypocrites, unstable, double-minded workers of iniquity," &c., which may be looked upon as having been fulfilled, with certain qualifications.* One of Lilly's Almanacks contained a picture of a burning town, which was of course applied to the Great Fire, and the astrologer was in consequence examined before the Committee of the House of Commons which sat to investigate the cause of that disaster. Thomas Briggs, a Quaker, preached in the streets of the city that unless the people repented of their sins, London should be destroyed. Another Friend, Thomas Ibbit, of Huntingdonshire, came to London a few days before the fire commenced, and, with

* "Notes and Queries," vii. 80, 173.

his clothes all loose about him, "as if they had been put on in haste, just out of bed," he went about denouncing judgment by fire against the doomed town. The terrible Fire of London burst forth three days after Ibbitt's first public prophecy.*

Christopher Love, who was beheaded at Tower Hill in August, 1651, delivered certain predictions couched in mysterious and inflated language, but ending with a calculation on St. John's Revelation "and the prophecy which St. Jerome copied off, and translated out of the Hebrew language, as it is written on Seth's Pillar in Damascus." This pillar, says our prophet, was built by Seth, and the inscription on it written by Enoch. According to this ancient authority, there were to be "great earthquakes and commotions by sea and land in 1779, wars in France and Germany in 1780, destruction of the Papacy in 1790, the stars will wander and the moon turn as blood in 1800, a great earthquake over all the world in 1805. God will be universally known by all: then a general reformation and peace for ever, when the people shall learn war no more."†

Lady Eleanor Audley, fifth daughter of the Earl of Castlehaven, believed herself to be inspired by the spirit of Daniel the prophet, and published sundry strange and wonderful prophecies. She built her faith upon anagrams, and thus proclaimed her title to inspiration:—

Eleanor Audeley,
Reveale, O Daniel.

Charles I. she politely proclaimed to be the

* Howitt, ii. 301. † "Miraculous Prophecies," ii. p. 37.

Beast of prophecy ; and her husband, Sir John Davies, having thrown some of her vaticinations into the fire, she showed him his judgment thus :—

John Daves
Jove's hand,

to which she added that within three years he would die, which appears to have happened accordingly. The Duke of Buckingham's death was also foreshadowed by her ; and her credit being thus advanced, she became so industrious that she was cited before the Court of High Commission, where she exhibited with much confidence her anagrammatical commission of prophecy. But Lamb, Dean of Arches, effectually settled her by producing this anagram upon her name :—

Dame Eleanor Davies,
Never so mad a lady.

She survived this trial 18 years, but we hear no more of her prophecies.*

The Brahan Seer is said to have been born in Lewis early in the 17th century. His last prophecy asserted that the Seaforth estates were to be inherited "by a white-hooded lassie from the East." This, it seems, was fulfilled in the person of Lady Hood, who, on the death of her husband, Sir Samuel Hood, came home from the East, arrayed in widow's weeds, and bearing, of course, the name of *Hood*.†

* H. B. Wheatley : "Anagrams," 1862, p. 114.

† The Prophecies of the Brahan Seer (Coinneach Odhar Fiosaiche). By Alex. MacKenzie, Editor of the "Celtic Magazine." Inverness, 1877.

In the 17th century the predictions of Kotterus, Drabicius, and Poniatowski excited much attention, and were collected into a volume by J. A. Comenius, and printed in 1657, under the title of "*Lux in Tenebris*." "The prophecies," says Mr. Crossley, "all pictured in glowing terms the approaching ruin of the House of Austria, and the speedy downfall of the Pope, and created an extraordinary sensation at the time of their publication. Nothing, however, came of these predictions."* The siege of Vienna by the Turks again called public attention to the book, and, "had Vienna been taken, Drabicius would have been more talked of than the Grand Vizier." Drabicius was a Moravian, born in 1588, and prophesied from 1638 to 1666, altering the dates to suit the changes of the times. He prophesied that he himself should die peaceably in his bed, but, on the contrary, after having embraced the Roman Catholic faith, he fell into the clutches of the Imperialists in 1671, and his right hand was cut off, his tongue cut out, and his body decapitated.†

Christina Poniatowski is said to have prophesied the victory of Gustavus Adolphus and the death of Wallenstein. She appears to have been a born mystic, a fair saint; but after some years of prophetic inspiration, she fulfilled the happier vocations of wife and mother, and disturbed the Pope and the Kings no more with her burden of woes.‡

* Worthington's "Diary," i. 138.

† Worthington's "Diary," ii. 358.

‡ Concerning these three Moravian prophets the reader may consult Bayle (art. Kotterus, Comenius, Drabicius) and the life of Comenius prefixed to the English version of his "*School of Infancy*." London, 1858.

Amongst the Camisards were many persons both old and young who were thought to be endowed with prophetic gifts,* and thousands hazarded life and limb, and suffered the most terrible persecution, in the full faith of the Divine nature of that inspiration which made the Church of the Desert the wonder of Europe.

The "Previsions of Orval," said to have been written by Philip Olivarius in 1544, made considerable sensation in 1848, as it contained passages supposed to refer to the fall of the Bourbons, &c. It is, however, known to have been the forgery of a priest of the diocese of Verdun.†

Jaspers, a Westphalian peasant, who died in 1830, is said to have prophesied that a great road would be carried through the forest of Badelschwing, on which carriages without horses would run, making a dreadful noise. The railroad from Cologne to Minden now goes through this district. He also prophesied that Frederick William IV. would be the last King of Prussia. The foundation of the German Empire appears to confirm this prediction.‡

Lady Hester Stanhope, amongst her other eccentricities, kept a prophet, who not only

* An interesting account of these French prophets, by William Howitt, will be found in the "Spiritual Magazine," vi. 363, 406. Howitt is a firm believer in their real inspiration.

† "Notes and Queries," 4th S., vii. 53. An English translation was published in 1848, and copious extracts are given in "All the Year Round," N.S., vii. 375.

‡ "All the Year Round," N.S., vii. 373.

revealed to her the exact date of Napoleon's escape from Elba, but also foretold the earthquake of Aleppo and Antioch. Dr. Wolff was present at a party where a letter from Lady Hester was read warning her friends against visiting those places, and announcing their approaching destruction.*

When Josephine, afterwards Empress of the French, was a child, a negress foretold that she would attain a more than queenly glory, but would fall from it before her death.

Mademoiselle le Normand, a famous prophet at the commencement of the present century, died in 1843, after having been consulted by many famous personages. Some curious instances of the fulfilment of her predictions are told. Thus she is said to have foretold the fall of Robespierre, the future greatness of Napoleon, the divorce of Josephine, &c. She was several times imprisoned by order of Napoleon, but finally seems to have found prophesy a profitable calling, and acquired an income of 20,000*fr.*, which she left chiefly to her nephew, M. Hugo.†

In 1816 Thomas Martin, a working man of La Beauce, had an interview with Louis XVII., told the King a secret which was believed to have been known to the monarch alone, and asserted that he had been divinely commissioned to deliver certain admonitious predic-

* Howitt's "History of the Supernatural," ii. 27.

† There is a long account of her in the "Spiritual Mag.," 1866, N.S., i. 297, chiefly derived from her autobiography.

tions. One of these has been applied to the events of the late war, as it announces the destruction of several French towns, &c., &c.*

Napoleon III. has been the object of much occult learning. In 1854 a bust of him appeared, in which his beard was arranged in an unusual manner, and a curious reader informed the public that according to the rabbins those who parted their beards in the mode adopted by the Emperor were invincible against the world. †

Numerical prophecies are very common, and sometimes very curious. Louis IX. of France was born in 1215; the sum of these digits is 9. Charles VII. was born in 1402; the sum of the digits is 7. Louis XII. was born in 1461; the sum of the digits is 12. Louis XIV. was crowned in 1643; the sum of the digits is 14. It will be observed that the sum of the digits in each case is the same as the number of the king in order of succession.

Louis XIII., called at the time Loys de Bourbon, married Anne d'Autriche in 1615; the sum of these digits is 13. Loys' name is composed of 13 letters, so is Anne's; the young king and queen were only 13 years old at the time of marriage; Louis was the 13th king of the name; Anne was the 13th Anne of Austria.

The great French Revolution began in 1789; the sum of the digits is 25, which added to 1789 gives 1814, the year of Napoleon's captivity at

* There is a long and tedious account of this affair, entitled "*Le Passe et l'Avenir*." Paris, 1832. See also "*Notes and Queries*," vii. 32, and "*Spiritual Herald*," 1856, i. 129.

† "*Notes and Queries*," x. 285.

Elba. Rotespierre died 1794; the sum of the digits added to the date gives 1815, the year of the final overthrow of Napoleon.

Charles II. of England was born in 1630; the sum of the digits is 10, which added to the date makes 1640, the year the Parliament attacked the kingly power. The sum of the digits of 1640 is 11, which added to the date makes 1651, the year of the battle of Worcester, when Charles II. was driven into exile.

George I. ascended the throne in 1714; the sum of the digits is 13, which added to the date gives 1727, the date of his death.

Louis XVI. ascended the throne in 1774, which figures, added together, give the date of his execution, thus:—

$$\begin{array}{r} 1774 \\ 1 \\ 7 \\ 7 \\ 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

1793

Equally curious is the result which this process gives in a more recent case. Napoleon III. was born 1808, and proclaimed Emperor in 1853. The Empress was born 1826, and was married in 1853. Each of these figures added together gives the date of abdication:—

1853	1853	1853	1853
1	1	1	1
8	8	8	8
0	5	2	5
8	3	6	3
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
1870	1870	1870	1870

the date of their abdication.

In 1869 the Chevalier de Chatelain published some verses of his own, attributing to Nostradamus a prophecy that the Second Empire should last "Dix-huit ans moins un quart—et pas un jour de plus," a prediction curiously fulfilled on the 2nd September, 1870.*

Very numerous are the popular prophecies which foreboded the decline of France, and the ruin of her capital.†

Amongst those whose utterances have been supposed to contain prophetic matter may be named Anna Trapnel (1653), Swedenborg, John Wilson, Dr. John Gill, Alstedius, John Tellinghast, John Lacy, Bishop Newton, Paul Grebnar, Walter Gostello, Napier of Merchistoun, Brother Robert (a French Monk), Wm. Hackett, Brigitta, Lidwina, Hildegard, and some hundreds more.

To attempt to register even the names of the modern prophets would be far beyond our space and power. What has been given may serve as a specimen of what remains untold.

"A long and curious list might be given of prophets who have lived to see their prophecies falsified. A still larger one might be collected of Apocalyptic interpreters, who, like Beverley, the author of the 'Scripture Line of Time,' and Hartlib's friend Sadler, the author of 'Olbia,' have found it necessary to be constantly fixing and refixing the periods of the Millennium and second coming of Christ,

* "Notes and Queries," 4th series, vi. 396.

† An interesting article on these predictions, by D. Blair, of Melbourne, will be found in "Notes and Queries," 4th series, vii. 542.

from the provoking circumstance that the days originally named for their accomplishment in the life-time of the writers had passed by without any extraordinary manifestation."*

Amongst English prophets none have attained so large a fame as Nixon. Two of our most famous novelists have alluded to the prophet, for his vaticinations "were a subject of general curiosity about the time of the Rebellion of 1745, to such a degree that Fielding has introduced them, through the mouth of Partridge, amongst the current superstitions then popularly connected with the attempts of the Adventurer," and, in our own day, Dickens has put a reference to them in the mouth of Sam Weller. Dr. Ormerod, our chief authority in all relating to Cheshire, says: "The birth of this individual has been assigned to the time of Edward IV.; but a second story also exists, which refers him to the time of James I., a date palpably false, as many of the supposed prophecies were to be fulfilled at an antecedent period. He is said to have attracted the Royal notice by foretelling, in Cheshire, the result of the Battle of Bosworth, on recovering from a sudden stupor with which he was seized while the battle was fighting in Leicestershire, and to have been sent for to Court shortly afterwards, where he was starved to death through forgetfulness, in a manner which he had himself predicted. The silence of registers respecting him is of course accounted for by the time he lived in. That of the Harleian MSS. is more singular; but it

* James Crossley, F.S.A., in "Worthington's Diary," ii. 5.

must be remembered that those enormous Cheshire collections are mostly copies of deeds, and that the very few original narratives they contain relate mostly to contemporary events. Webb, in his "Itinerary," may possibly allude to him as the author of 'Old Prophecies,' in the account of Delamere, but obviously rejects the story, if he does allude to it. It is, however, not impossible that the fiction may be of some antiquity, for among all the prose vulgarly printed as his prophecies, and referring, in modern language, to places and families unknown at his time, will be found some prophecies of a more general nature, running in metre which varies little from the poetry of the day.

"Many instances of the fulfilment of his trivial predictions are maintained in Cheshire, such as the meeting of the Abbeyes of Norton and Vale Royal in the building of Acton bridge; the removal of a mill to Luddington Hill by Sir John Crewe; and the draining of Ridley Pool; but by far the most important is that alluded to by Oldmixon, who says, in an edition of these prophecies, that in pursuance of the prediction that an eagle should visit Vale Royal when the heir of that house was to be born, an eagle did come, remained near the house three days, and was seen by thousands of people, and, among others, by the sister and Mr. St. John, the brother of Mrs. Cholmondeley, who were brought to the window by the acclamations of the people. Oldmixon states the story on the authority of Lady Cowper,

who had it from Patrick, Bishop of Ely, chaplain to Sir Walter St. John, Mrs. Cholmondeley's father, and also from her sister.*

"If this could be established, Nixon might be referred to the list of certain individuals, among whom may be classed Henry VI., who are said to have possessed a gift of this kind, united with general weakness of understanding. Oldmixon states that snow was on the ground, which may accord with the birth of the person referred to—Charles, eldest son of Thomas Cholmondeley, Esq., by Anne St. John, on the 12th January, 1684-5; and he was also heir of Vale Royal, his last surviving brother, by the first marriage, having died in 1679. But it must be remembered that he died as late as 1756, and was only the grandfather of the present generation, and that this fulfilment of a prophecy said to have been looked to for generations by the county, and to have drawn thousands to Vale Royal, is not in two subsequent generations supported by the slightest memorandum, or even a single tradition preserved in a family it so much concerned. Under these circumstances, the fact itself, and the very material circumstance of the prophecy being in circulation before the fact, must rest entirely on the credibility given to Oldmixon."

Dr. Ormerod's incredulity is shared by Mr. T. Worthington Barlow, the author of "*Cheshire: its Historical and Literary Associations*" (Manchester, 1855; see page 108); but it is important

* The local allusions in Nixon are, for the most part, easily recognised. The Wanslow Lane mentioned in the rhyming prophecy should be Swanlow Lane.

here to recollect what does not appear to have occurred to them, that as Oldmixon's pamphlet had gone through a score of editions before 1756, had been printed at London, Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c., and must have been very extensively circulated in Cheshire and the neighbouring counties, the chances are that if the statements were incorrect, some one of the many who must have known their inaccuracy would have been eager to proclaim them false, even though the persons most interested did not care to do so.

"In the compilation of this work," continues Dr. Ormerod, "there has not occurred any direct or collateral confirmation of the story, or the previous prophecy, in any authentic document whatsoever. A portrait, with the name of Nixon, was engraved by Harding from a picture in the possession of Owen Brereton, Esq., which he picked up accidentally, in a very tattered state, from some children in Cheshire, who used it as a plaything; but its connection with the person it is reported to be the likeness of is altogether imaginary."*

It will be seen from this extract that Dr. Ormerod is somewhat sceptical even as to the existence of the prophet. It is certainly singular that no printed account of him is to be found before that issued by Oldmixon, about 1714, whilst the metrical prophecies do not seem to have been published until much later in the century, although in their style they exhibit signs of considerable antiquity. To consider them as mere modern forgeries would

* "History of Cheshire," ii. 100.

be very uncritical, for, however little value we may attach to them as predictions of future events, there can be no doubt that the language in which they are conveyed is much more ancient than that of the time when they were first printed. Amongst the traditions still current about the prophet is one which perpetuates a very old saw. The Miller of Storeton Hill asked Nixon which would be the most desirable locality on the Day of Judgment. The answer was "In God's croft, between Mersey and Dec." Nixon's name has sometimes been attached to productions with which he had no connection, and it is not always easy to separate the genuine from the apocryphal. The following, which is printed in the *Chester Miscellany* (1750), is evidently the work of some sly Jacobite hiding beneath the mask of the ancient Cheshire prophet. It has been reprinted in the *Cheshire and Lancashire Historical Collector*.

"Tuesday, December 1, 1747.

"in Cheshire, Nov. 20, 1747.

"I doubt not, but most people in this county, have heard of a stone found some time ago in an adjacent township, where there was once a great pool. This mere, Nixon prophesied, should come to be mown and sown, which, many years ago, by draining, came to pass. The stone was discovered by the ploughs striking upon it, and was, with no small difficulty, got out of the earth. I have now, by the assistance of our exciseman (a University

man, but of too much merit to get anything worth while in the Church), put together the letters upon it, and at length made out a legible inscription, of which the following lines are a translation :—

“ TO POSTERITY.

“ Whene'er this stone, now hid beneath the lake,
A steed shall trample, or a plough shall break,
Then, O my country ! shalt thou groan distrest,
Grief swell thine eyes, and horror chill thy breast.
Through all thy streets, complaints too just, shall sound,
Loud as the billows breaking on the ground.
Then o'er thy fields shall scarlet dragons stray,
And rapine and pollution mark their way ;
These pests in swarms the peaceful vale shall fright,
Still fierce to threaten, still afraid to fight :
The plenteous year's whole product they'll devour,
And fruit insatiate pluck, and crop the flow'r :
And glutt'ning on the industrious peasant's spoil,
Rob without fear, and fatten without toil.
Then servile prelates, with their servile priests
Shall, self-debas'd, become the scoffer's jests.
Her once firm sons shall urge Britannia's doom,
And patriots erst shall parricides become.
In domes deprived of heaven's free gift, the light,
Shall Albion's sons endure a Greenland night.
Then edicts shall go forth the cars among,
And tax-clogged wheels drag heavily along.
O'er Europe's world shall discord stretch her wings,
Embroiling emperors, queens, and states, and kings.
On Belgia's soil shall British hosts be strewn,
Slain in her feuds, and quarrels not their own.

Then the proud lilies shall o'erspread the plain,
Repeat their triumphs, and enlarge the reign ;
While that once mighty terror of the field,
The lion, shall to these famed lilies yield ;
He, too, shall crouch to mean, ignoble force,
Cow'd, kick'd, and trampled by a wretched horse."

Leaving the reader, then, to give that amount of belief or disbelief which he may think proper, we invite his attention to the following pages, as giving a faithful reprint of all that is known on a subject which must be interesting not only to every Cestrian, but to every lover of the curious in literature and the occult in science.

W. E. A. A.

NIXON'S
CHESHIRE PROPHECY

AT LARGE;

Published from the Lady Cowper's Correct Copy,

WITH

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL REMARKS,

AND

Several Instances wherein it is Fulfilled.

By JOHN OLDMIXON, Esq.

[FIRST PUBLISHED AT LONDON IN 1714.]



INTRODUCTION.

This remarkable prophecy has been carefully revised, corrected, and improved; also some account given of our author, Robert Nixon, who was but a kind of idiot, and used to be employed in following the plough. He had lived in some farmers' families, and was their drudge and their jest.

At last Thomas Cholmondley, of Vale Royal, Esq., took him into his house, where he lived when he composed this prophecy, which he delivered with as much gravity and solemnity as if he had been an oracle; and it was observed, that though the fool was a driveller, and could not speak common sense when he was uninspired, yet, in delivering his prophecies, he spoke plainly and sensibly; how truly will be seen in the following pages.

As to the credit of this prophecy, I dare say it is as well attested as any of Nostradamus's, or Merlin's and has come to pass as well as the best of Squire Bickerstaff's, the latter the greatest prophet of the last century.

Now, I would not have anybody laugh at it merely because it is a prophecy. Some ungodly people think there has been no witch since the Witch of Endor, nor no prophet since Malachi; but it is plain enough that great men in all ages have had recourse to prophecy as well as the vulgar.

Fortune-telling is in the low kind of prophecy; and yet those minor prophets, the fortune-tellers, have many advocates to argue and, if you please, to prove the truth and importance of their predictions. Not to give instances out of ancient history of the wonders performed by the English, Scots, and Irish prophets, the most modern story furnishes us with examples of the greatest monarchs that have received comfort from the art of soothsaying. I would not have all grave persons despise the inspiration of Nixon. The late French King gave audience to an inspired farrier, and rewarded him with a hundred pistoles for his prophetic intelligence; though, by what I can learn, he did not come near our Nixon for gifts.

The Cheshire Prophecy has so many oddnesses in it, that I am sure the reader will be glad to see a thing which is as well known in that County Palatine as Mother Shipton's in Yorkshire.

The simplicity, the circumstances, the history of the Cheshire prophecy are so remarkable, that I could not help communicating it to the public, who, I hope, will be as much delighted with it as I was myself.

By the way, this is not a prophecy of to-day; it is older than the powder plot, and the story will make it appear that there is as little imposture in it as the Jacobites pretend there is in the person it seems to have an eye to; but whether they are both impostures alike or not, I leave the reader to determine.

[J. OLDMIXON.]

THE PROPHECY.

In the reign of King James I. there lived a fool, whose name was Nixon. One day he came in out of the field from plough, and laying down the things he had in his hands, he remained a little while in the dumps, and then with a hoarse voice said, "Now I will prophesy." Then he spoke as follows:

“When a raven shall build in a stone lion’s mouth on the top of a church in Cheshire, then a King of England shall be driven out of his kingdom, and never return more.”

“When an eagle shall sit on the top of the house, then an heir shall be born to the Cholmondley’s family; and this heir shall live to see England invaded by foreigners, who shall proceed so far as a town in Cheshire; but a miller, named Peter, shall be born with two heels on one foot, and at that time living in a mill of Mr. Cholmondley’s, he shall be instrumental in delivering the nation. The person who then governs the nation will be in great trouble, and sculk about; the invading king shall be killed, laid across a horse’s back like a calf, and led in triumph. The miller having been instrumental in it, shall bring forth the person that then governs the kingdom, and be knighted for what he has done; and after that England shall see happy days. A young new set of men of virtuous manners shall come, who shall prosper, and make a flourishing church for two hundred years.

“As a token of the truth of all this, a wall of Mr. Cholmondley’s shall fall. If it fall downwards, the church shall be oppressed, and rise no more; but if upwards, next the rising hill on the side of it, then shall it flourish again.

Under this wall shall be found the bones of a British king.

“A pond shall run with blood three days, and the cross-stone pillar in the forest sink so low into the ground that a crow from the top of it shall drink of the best blood in England.

“A boy shall be born with three thumbs, and shall hold three kings’ horses, while England shall three times be won and lost in one day.”

The original may be seen in several families in that county, and is particularly in the hands of Mr. Egerton, of Olton, with many other remarkables; as, that Pecferton wind-mill would be removed to Ludditon Hill; that there should be so great a slaughter of men that horses saddled should run about till their girths rotted away. But this is sufficient to prove Nixon as great a prophet as Partridge, and we shall give other proofs of it before we have done with him.

I know your prophets are generally for raw-head and bloody bones, and therefore do not mind it much; for I might add that Olton Mill shall be driven with blood instead of water. But these soothsayers are great butchers, and every hall is with them a slaughter-house.

Now, as for authorities to prove this prophecy to be genuine, and how it has been

hitherto accomplished, I might refer myself to the whole county of Cheshire, where it is in everyone's mouth, and has been so these forty years. As much as I have of the manuscript was sent me by a person of sense and veracity, as little partial to visions as anybody. For my own part, I build nothing on this or any other prophecy, only there is something so very odd in the story, and so pat in the wording of it, that I cannot help giving it as I found it.

The family of the Cholmondleys is very ancient in this county, and takes its name from a place so called near Nantwich; there are also Cholmton and Cholmondeston; but the seat of that branch of the family which kept our prophet Nixon is at Vale Royal, on the river Weave, in Delamere Forest. It was formerly an abbey* founded by Edward I., and came to the Cholmondleys from the famous family of the Holcrofts. When Nixon prophesied, this family was near being extinct, the heir having married Sir Walter St. John's

*A subsequent edition of Oldmixon's Tract adds this note:—

“It is reported that there is a room in this house, the door and windows of which are kept closely fastened, and no one is ever permitted to enter the same except the next heir, when he attains his twenty-first year, at which time he goes in alone, and when he returns it is shut up as before.”

daughter, a lady not esteemed very young, who, notwithstanding, being with child, fell in labour, and continued so for many days. (During which time an eagle sat upon the house-top, and flew away when she was delivered, which proved to be of a son).

A raven is also known to have built in a stone lion's mouth in the steeple of the church of Over, in the forest of Delamere. Not long before the abdication of King James the wall spoken of fell down, and fell upwards, and, in removing the rubbish, were found the bones of a man of more than ordinary size. A pond at the same time ran with water that had a reddish tincture, and was never known to have done so before or since.

Headless Cross, in the forest, which in the memory of man was several feet high, is now sunk within half a foot of the ground.

In the parish of Budworth a boy was born, about eighteen years ago, with three thumbs; the youth is still living there: and the miller, Peter, lives in Nagginshire Mills, in expectation of fulfilling this prophecy on the person of Perkin: he hath also two heels on one foot, but I find he does not intend to make use of them, for he is a bold Briton, and a loyal subject to King George, zealous for the Protestant succession in the illustrious House of

Hanover, has a vote for the knights of the shire, and never fails to give it on the right side; in a word, Peter will prate or box for the good cause that Nixon has listed him in, and if he does not do the business, this must be said of him, that no man will bid fairer for it; which the Lady Egerton was so apprehensive of that, wishing well to another restoration, she often instigated her husband to turn him out of the mill; but he looked upon it as whimsey, and so Peter still continues there, in hopes of being as good a knight as Sir Philip, his landlord, was.

Of this Peter I have been told that the Lady Narcliff, of Chelsea, and the Lady St. John, of Battersea, have often been heard to talk, and that they both asserted the truth of our prophecy and its accomplishment, with many particulars which are more extraordinary than any I have yet mentioned.

The noise of Nixon's predictions reaching the ears of King James I., he would needs see this fool, who cried and made ado that he might not go to Court; and the reason that he gave was, *that he should be starved*. (A very whimsical fancy of his: Courts are not places that people often starve in when they once come there, whatever they did before.) The King being informed of Nixon's refusing to

come, said he would take particular care that he should not be starved, and ordered him to be brought up. Nixon cried out *he was sent for again*, and soon after the messenger arrived, who brought him up from Cheshire.

How or whether he prophesied to his Majesty, nobody can tell; but he is not the first fool that has made a good Court prophet. That Nixon might be well provided for, 'twas ordered he should be kept in the kitchen, where he grew so troublesome in licking and picking the meat, that the cooks locked him up in a hole; and the King going on a sudden from Hampton-Court to London, they forgot the fool in the hurry, and he was really starved to death.

There are a great many passages of this fool-prophet's life and sayings transmitted in tradition from father to son in this County Palatine; as, that when he lived with a farmer before he was taken into Mr. Cholmondley's family, he goaded an ox so cruelly, that one of the ploughmen threatened to beat him for abusing his master's beast. Nixon said, "My master's beast will not be his three days." A life in an estate dropping in that time, the lord of the manor took the same ox for a herriot. This account, as whimsical and romantic as it is, was told to the Lady Cowper, in the year 1670, by Dr. Patrick, late Bishop of Ely,

then chaplain to Sir Walter St. John; and that lady had the following further particulars relating to this prophecy, and the fulfilling of many parts of it, from Mrs. Chute, sister to Mrs. Cholmondley, of Vale Royal, who affirmed that a multitude of people gathered together to see the eagle before-mentioned, the bird was frightened from her young; that she herself was one of them, and the cry among the people was, "Nixon's prophecy is fulfilled, and we shall have a foreign king." She declared that she read over the prophecy many times, when her sister was with child of the heir who now enjoys the estate. She particularly remembers that King James II. was plainly pointed at, and that it was foretold he should endeavour to subvert the laws and religion of this kingdom, for which reason they would rise and turn him out; that the eagle of which Nixon prophesied perched in one of the windows all the time her sister was in labour. She said it was the biggest bird she ever saw; that it was in a deep snow, and it perched on the edge of a great bow-window, which had a large border on the outside, and that she and many others opened the window to try to scare it away, but it would not stir till Mrs. Cholmondley was delivered, after which it took flight to a great tree over

against the room her sister lay in, where, having stayed about three days, it flew away in the night. She affirmed further to the Lady Cowper that the falling of the garden wall was a thing not to be questioned, it being in so many people's memory. That it was foretold that the heir of Vale Royal should live to see England invaded by foreigners, and that he should fight bravely for his king and his country: That the miller mentioned is alive, and expects to be knighted, and is in the very mill that is foretold: That he should kill two invaders who should come in, the one from the West, and the other from the North: that he from the North should bring with him of all nations, Swedes, Danes, Germans, and Dutch; and that in the folds of his garments he should bring Fire and Famine, Plague and Murder: That many great battles should be fought in England, one upon London Bridge, which would be so bloody that people would ride in London streets up to their horses' bellies in blood: that several other battles should be fought up and down most parts in Cheshire; and that the last that ever would be fought in England should be on Delamere Forest: that the heir of Olton, whose name is E——n, and has married Earl Cholmondley's sister, shall be hanged up at his own gate.

Lastly, he foretells great glory and prosperity to those who stand up in defence of their laws and liberties, and ruin and misery to those that should betray them. He says, the year before this would happen bread corn would be very dear, and that the year following more troubles should begin, which would last three years; that the first would be moderate, the second bloody, and the third intolerable; that unless they were shortened, no mortal could bear them, and that there were no mischiefs but what poor England would feel at that time. But that GEORGE, the son of GEORGE, should put an end to all. That afterwards the Church should flourish, and England be the most glorious nation upon earth.

The same Lady Cowper was not content to take these particulars from Mrs. Chute, but she inquired of Sir Thomas Aston of the truth of this prophecy; and he attested it was in great reputation in Cheshire, and that the facts were known by every one to have happened as Nixon said they would; adding, that the morning before the garden wall fell, his neighbour, Mr. Cholmondley, going to ride out a hunting, said, as he passed by it, "Nixon seldom fails, but now I think he will, for he foretold that this day my garden wall would fall, and I think it looks as if it would stand

these forty years : " that he had not been gone a quarter of an hour before the wall split, and fell upwards against the rising of the hill, which, as Nixon would have it, was the presage of a flourishing church.

As to the removal of Pecferton Mill, it was done by Sir John Crew, the mill having lost its trade there, for which he ordered it to be set upon Ludditon Hill ; and, being asked if he did it to fulfil the prophecy, he declared he never thought of it. I myself have inquired of a person who knows Mr. Cholmondley's pond as well as Rosamond's, in St. James's Park, and he assured me the falling of the wall and the pond running blood, as they call it, are facts which in Cheshire anyone would be reckoned mad for making the least question of them.

As there are several particulars in this prophecy which remain unfulfilled, so, when they come to pass, some other circumstances may be added, which are not convenient to be told till they be accomplished.

If I had a mind to look into the antiquities of this county, I might find that prodigies and prophecies are no unusual things there. Camden tells us that at Brereton, not many miles from Vale Royal, which gave name to a famous ancient, numerous, and knightly family,

there is a thing as strange as the perching of the eagle or the falling of the wall, which, he says, was attested to him by many persons, and was commonly believed; that before any heir of this family dies there are seen, in a lake adjoining, the bodies of trees swimming upon the waters for several days together. He likewise adds that near the Abbey of St. Maurice, in Burgundy, there is a fishpond in which a number of fishes are put, equal to the number of monks of that place; and if any one of them happens to be sick, there is a fish seen floating on the water; and in case the fit of sickness proves fatal to the monk, the fish foretells it by its own death some days before. This the learned Camden relates in his description of Cheshire; and the opinion of the trees swimming in the lake near Brereton prevails all about the country to this day, only with this difference, that some say it is one log that swims, and some say many.

Lancashire, which is not far off, has been famous for witches, and I am afraid Cheshire is a little infected by its neighbourhood. Those that will not believe our prophecy, may leave it alone; but if hope is a good help to faith, I shall not be long among the incredulous.

[J. OLDMIXON.]

THE LIFE
OF
Nixon, the Cheshire Prophet;

CONTAINING
SEVERAL SURPRISING PASSAGES
OF
His Life and Prophecies,

NEVER BEFORE PRINTED,
IN A LETTER FROM A GENTLEMAN
AT NAMPTWICH TO HIS FRIEND
IN LONDON.

[FIRST PUBLISHED AT LONDON IN 1714.]

LIFE OF NIXON,

THE CHESHIRE PROPHET.

Nantwich, Mar. 24, 1714.

Sir,—I have read over your Cheshire Prophecy, and must needs say, that what you have added is to be found in the original, written in doggrel verse: I have read it over and over; and though it is longer than your Prophecy, yet I think the substance of it is there; and I shall now give you some material passages, which will serve to make your Prophecy complete. To these I shall add a short account of his life as I have been able to inform myself of it by old people. I could meet with but one man who remembered the Prophet, and that was old Woodman of Copnal. He says, that Nixon was a short squab fellow, had a great head, and goggle eyes; that he used to drivel as he spoke, which was

very rarely, and was extremely surly. He particularly had a spite against children, and would run after them to beat them when they came in his way, especially if they made sport with him, as he said they used to do, and himself among the rest, when he was a lad. He was at first plough-boy to Farmer Crowton, of Swanlow, and so stubborn, that they could make him do nothing without beating. They could seldom get anything out of him but yes and no; and if he spoke much more, 'twas unintelligible; nay, he would hardly say no and yes, unless he was pinched by Hunger. He had a very good stomach; and the report was, that he would eat up a shoulder of mutton at a meal, if they would let him, and a good luncheon of bread and cheese after it. The people had, it seems, a strange reverence even for his stupidity; and they took his silence to be like that of an oracle, as portentous as if he prophesied.

The first time that he was found out to be a prophet, was upon this occasion. Farmer Crowton being one day at plough in a field, near the River Weaver in Swanlow Parish, and his boy Nixon following him, the boy stopt on a sudden, dropt his bottle and budget which he carried to field with him, and stood motionless with his eyes fixed towards

heaven. Neither words nor blows could get him out of this trance for the space of an hour. When he recovered, he took up the things he had dropt, and followed the plough. His master, and the men that were at work in the same field, stood by him all the while, taking him to be in a fit; but wondered still that he stood upright, and did not fall down. He himself seemed to be insensible of any alteration that had happened to him. But for about a quarter of an hour after, he talked very rationally of several things that had been done some time before, and dropt expressions of others that were to be done; which presently made his master, and those that were with him, conclude that Nixon's dulness had something sacred in it; and that his words were oracles, especially when some little things he foretold fell out according to his Prediction. 'Twas with this farmer that he lived when he prophesied of his master's ox, as is mentioned in his prophecy.

I must correct some errors that you have been led into by the imperfect copies of his prophecy; as that about the Falling of the wall, which some zealous People have applied to the Church; whereas, in truth, it has a literal reference to the State only. Woodman said, the common tradition has been,

That when the wall belonging to Vale Royal House fell down, it was to denote some remarkable change in the government: That if 'twas a serene day, and the wall fell inward, it signified an advantageous and happy change; but if it were a stormy day, and fell outward, and any of the stones fell into the brook, it signified the direct contrary. To this he added, that the Cholmondley family, whose seat it was, kept several workmen in yearly pay to support the wall, and every month to inspect it all round. That it was buttressed both within and without; and the week before it fell, the workmen gave in their report, that it was so strong, it might reasonably last an hundred years without any repairs.

This, I assure you, is not only what the old man told me, but what I have heard from several others, and can get well attested, if it is thought proper: As also the particulars of the falling of the wall; which are these:

“Upon the fourth of August, 1688, about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, being a calm and clear day, without the least breath of wind, that wall fell flat inwards all at once, and not so much as one single stone fell outwards.”

This happening so little a while before the Revolution, it was taken notice of as an accident which was very much to our advantage.

And as there was a greater rising for the Prince of Orange in Cheshire than in any other county in England, why may we not imagine that Nixon's Prophecy contributed very much to it? The objection to this may be that the owner of the house, Thomas Cholmondley, Esq., was a Jacobite; and it is not likely that anything about him could bode well to the Revolution. But his being a Jacobite gives the greater authority to the prediction and the fulfilling of it. For it is not likely that one who was an enemy to the Prince of Orange should let a miracle be wrought in his house in favour of the happy change he soon after accomplished. I should not have made this digression, had not some silly people, almost as stupid as Nixon, but by no means so well gifted in prophecy, given out, that the falling of the wall denoted the rising of the Pretender; and this, too, just as he was running away from Scotland.

I cannot help observing to you upon this occasion, that some of us in this county were strangely spirited by your prophecy. When the rebels advanced to Preston, we were told that they intended to march through our county into Flintshire and Denbighshire; if they had, their route must have been through Delamere Forest, where Nixon lived and

prophesied ; and the Miller Peter, with his countrymen, were resolved to have given very great credit to your prophecy, which is abused when it has any interpretation applied to it that has an eye to Popery and slavery : For as great a fool as Nixon was, he was not so stupid as our modern zealots, nor even dropt a word against the Protestant religion.

To return to old Woodman : He informed me further, that after it was known what a prophet Farmer Crowton had in his family, Mr. Cholmondley sent for the fellow, and kept him at his house, giving him in charge to his steward, whom he ordered to try whether he could make anything of him, and teach him to read. But Nixon's stupidity increased upon him, the more the steward endeavoured to improve him ; and the most he could do with him, was to make him hold his goad right, and drive oxen at plough. As he was once in the field with the rest of Mr. Cholmondley's servants, he let fall his goad on a sudden, as he had dropt his budget and bottle formerly. He stood motionless after the same manner, with his eyes fixt towards heaven. The servants talked to him, and beat him to get him to his work, and all to no purpose. He remained in a sort of trance for the space of an hour ; and then recovering,

he took up his goad, and went on with his business, as though nothing had befallen him. One of Mr. Cholmondley's men asked him, What ailed him? and why he stood there so long? To whom Nixon replied, That he had seen those things which he could not tell them, and which man never saw before. He then discoursed to the servants that crowded about him for nearly two hours, and spoke as reasonably as the best of them could have done, without any manner of hesitation in his Discourse:

He foretold the Civil Wars, the death of King Charles I., the restoration of King Charles II., the abdication of King James II., the Revolution and glorious war with France, and the flourishing state of this Kingdom afterwards: Adding, these things will as certainly happen, as that I shall be sent for by the King, and starved to death. When he had finished his speech, he returned to his natural dulness and silence; and unless he had been in one of his trances, he was always dull and mute; but while he was uttering his prophecies, he spoke clearly and with an air of assurance, that they would be accomplished. The servants as soon as they came home, told their master of this prodigy; and Mr. Cholmondley ordered them to write

down as much of it as they could remember, which they did, and it is preserved in that family to this day; together with some less material hints, as hard weather, and scarcity of provisions, &c., which would certainly happen. That family has always locked it up as a treasure, and whatever pains I have taken to procure a copy of it, I could never succeed, and despair now of getting it. Mr. Egerton of Olton, who is nearly related to the Cholmondley family, has a copy of it also, but he will not part with it. Both of those families do lay great stress on Nixon's predictions; and I must tell you they are two of the most ancient and honourable families in our county.

You have mentioned Nixon's being sent for to court by King James the First. Woodman says it was thus: When he came to court that King gave him in charge to one of his officers, commanding him to keep him in close confinement, and to make strict observations on his behaviour, that he might be assured there was nothing of imposture in him. This gentleman kept Nixon locked up, and going in a hurry with the King to Theobald's, he forgot to take care and leave him provisions till his return; by which means he was starved to death. It must be observed,

that Nixon could not speak, except it was immediately after he came out of his trance, and never could be brought to pronounce a sensible word more than aye or no, as hath been before observed, unless when he was pronouncing his oracles. There happened something with respect to Nixon and his going to court, like what I met with in the pamphlet you sent me, called the Drummer of Tedworth: for as that drummer left off beating when King Charles's courtiers came to be on the watch with him, and would not satisfy their curiosity; so our clown of a prophet, after he came to court, was entirely dumb, and pronounced no more prophecies. It is said he was not long there before he was starved to death. Nixon was very grateful to his Master Cholmondley; he prophesied that the heir to be born to the family, threescore and ten years after, should be endowed with very eminent qualifications, and arrive at greater honors than any of his ancestors had done: That he should distinguish himself by his loyalty and services to the King then reigning; and that after the happy settlement which would succeed the struggle, the peace would be lasting, with a continued series of honors and glory to the nation. This child, said Nixon, shall be known by the appearance of

an eagle at the time of his birth, with the circumstances mentioned in your Prophecy. A long time before the eagle appeared, the country people used to look out for it, and as often as the lady of Vale Royal lay in, they would cry, Where is the eagle? When will Nixon's heir be born? The appearance of the eagle was about five and twenty years ago: The lady who lay in was aunt to Henry St. John, late Lord Bolingbroke; when she was in labour, she heard great shoutings and acclamations of joy; and inquiring the reason, was told, the eagle so long talked of was come. Upon which her sister and Mr. J. S., who are both living, went to the window, saw the eagle sitting on a bough, and looked at it above a quarter of an hour. It was seen also by several thousands of people, and is such a confirmation of Nixon's Prophecy, that the truth of it is no where doubted of in this county, by either gentle or simple.

There is some variation in the original Prophecy from what is mentioned in your Prophecy about the competitors for the kingdom; the Germans, Dutch, and Danes, are to conquer those that bring fire and famine, plague and murder, in the folds of their garments; and we can understand none but the French by such bloody invaders; none but French

Papists would bring such destructions among Protestants. As for the Miller Peter, he was born about the time of the Revolution; and Nixon prophesied that he should have two heels on one foot, and be knighted; the two heels he hath already, but the spurs are not come to his lot. Yet, however, the country people in this neighbourhood have made a knight of him these many years, and honest Peter the Miller is Sir Peter in every one's mouth.

I must here correct an error of Mr. Addison in his Freeholder, who has not read your Prophecy with that attention and regard which a thing of such importance deserves, for he gives the Miller two thumbs, whereas Nixon gives him two heels. A mistake in the text of a prophecy is of a very dangerous consequence; and I doubt not, but upon this notice, in future editions, this error will be corrected, and justice done to honest Peter the Miller.

I am, yours,

W. E.

THE LIFE
OF
ROBERT NIXON
OF
THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

[FIRST PUBLISHED 17—.]

THE LIFE
OF
ROBERT NIXON
OF
THE BRIDGE HOUSE.

[FIRST PUBLISHED 17—.]

The Prophecy of Nixon has so often given a name to the productions of authors of different principles, that it is now almost become a doubt whether such a person ever existed. Passing through Cheshire, curiosity led me to inquire what credit these legends bore amongst the natives; and I was not a little surprised to find with what confidence they related events which have come to pass within the memory of many of the inhabitants; and how strictly they adhered to the notion that he would not fail in the rest. Among this number was a

namesake and descendant of the same family with this famous idiot, who at this time lives not far from Vale Royal, from whom I had mostly what follows, which he said he often heard his father, and other ancient people in the country, relate. I also obtained a manuscript copy, which seemed to bear the appearance of antiquity. Mr. Gerrard, Mr. Grimes, and others of the inhabitants of the forest of Delamere, very obligingly told me what they knew, and confirmed what was passed.

John, or Jonathan Nixon, the father of our prophet, was an husbandman, who had the lease of a farm from the abbey of Vale Royal, to this day known by the name of Bark or Bridge-house, in the parish of Over, near Newchurch, and not far from Vale Royal, in the forest of Delamere, which house is still kept up and venerated by the natives of Cheshire for nothing else, that I could hear of, but this extraordinary person's birth, which took place in Whitsuntide; and he was christened by the name of Robert in the year 1467, about the seventh year of Edward IV., and from his infancy he was remarkable for a stupidity and invincible ignorance, so that it was with great difficulty his parents could instruct him to drive the team, tend the cattle, and such sorts of rustic employment.

His parents at their decease left the farm and our Robert, then very young, to the care of an elder brother, with whom he first gave an instance of that foreknowledge which renders his name so famous.

As he was driving the team one day, whilst his brother's man guided the plough, he pricked an ox so very cruelly with his goad, that the plough-holder threatened to acquaint his master; on which Nixon said the ox should not be his brother's three days hence; which accordingly happened, for a life dropping in the estate, the lord of the manor took the same ox for an heriot.*

During his residence here he was chiefly distinguished for his simplicity; seldom spoke, and when he did, it was with so rough a voice that it was painful to hear him; he was remarkably satirical, and what he said had generally some prophetic meaning. It was about this time that the monk of Vale Royal having displeased him, he said in an angry tone:

When you the harrow come on high,
Soon a raven's nest will be,

which is well known to have come to pass in

* Or an acknowledgment which, by the tenure of some estates, is given to every new lord of a manor.

the person of the last abbot of that place, whose name was Harrow. Being called before Sir Thomas Holcroft, he was put to death for denying the supremacy of King Henry VIII. Having suppressed the abbey, the King gave the domain to this knight and his heirs, who bore a raven for their crest.

At another time he told them that Norton and Vale Royal Abbeys should meet on Acton Bridge—a thing at that time looked upon as improbable; yet those two abbeys being pulled down, the stones were used for that purpose; and, what was more improbable still, a small thorn, growing in the abbey yard, would become its door. We may easily guess no one thought this last would ever come to pass; and especially as it was understood by everyone at that time of day that thorns never grew so large. But this shows the uncertain meaning of a prophecy, and that what we understand one way is possibly meant quite different; so it happened in this case, for at the Reformation the savage ravagers, under the sanction of religion, sought nothing but rapine and plunder to enrich themselves; and under the name of banishing superstition and pulling down idolatry, spared not even the most revered lineaments of antiquity, the most sacred piles, the

most noble structures, or most valuable records—books written by our most venerable forefathers and heroic ancestors. Pieces of the nicest paint, or figures of their workmanship, being all lost—irrecoverably lost, in one common fit of destructive zeal which every hue and cry is too apt to raise in the breast of a hot-headed bigot; whilst the truly religious, honest, and learned men, regret to this day the loss those destructive times have occasioned. Whilst these reached Vale Royal, this thorn amongst the rest being cut down, was cast in the doorway, to prevent sheep, which grazed in the court, from going in.

But the Reformation he declares in still plainer terms, for he says:

A time shall come when priests and monks
Shall have no churches nor houses,
And places where images stood
Lined letters shall be good;
English books thro' churches are spread,
There shall be no holy bread.

It is not my intention to recite every particular he is said to have foretold, which either regard private families or past occasions; however, it may not be amiss to mention what is fresh in everyone's memory who lives near Delamere Forest, and was vouched to me by several of the oldest inhabitants:

Thro' Weaver-hall shall be a lone,*
 Ridley-park shall be sown and mown,
 And Darnell-park shall be hacked and hewn.

The two wings of Weaver Hall are now standing, and between them is a cart road; Ridley Pool is filled up, and made good meadow land; and in Darnel Park the trees are cut down, and it is made into pasture ground.

I also was assured that he foretold the use of broad wheels, &c.; and that the town of Northwich, now a considerable place of trade for salt, will be destroyed by water: which is expected to come to pass by the natives of Cheshire as much as any other part of his prophecy has done; and some urge that the navigable cuts lately made is the water meant; but whether a prejudice against those useful improvements may not have given rise to this notion, time alone can determine.

But what rendered Nixon the most noticed was, that at the time when the battle of Bosworth Field was fought between King Richard III. and King Henry VII., he stopped his team on a sudden, and pointing with his whip from one land to the other, cried, "Now, Richard! Now, Harry!" several times, till at last he said, "Now, Harry, get over that ditch,

* The term used in this country for a lane.

and you gain the day." The plough-holder, amazed, related what had passed when he came home, and the truth of the prediction was verified by special messengers sent to announce the proclamation of Henry King of England on the field of battle.

The messenger, who went this circuit, related on his return the prediction of Nixon concerning the King's success; which, though it had been confirmed by his arrival, had made it no news to the natives of those parts; but Henry, perhaps the wisest prince of his time, not willing to be deceived, nor yet doubting the dispensation of Providence, though by the mouth of a fool, sent the same messenger back to find Nixon, and to bring him before him. At the moment the King gave his orders, our prophet was in the town of Over, about which he ran like a madman, declaring the King had sent for him; and that he must go to Court, and there be *clammed*, that is—be starved to death; such a declaration caused a great deal of laughing in the town, to think that his Majesty, so noted for his wisdom, should send for a dirty drivelling clown to Court, and that, being sent for, he should fear to be starved there; but how great was their surprise in a few days after, when the messenger, passing through the town, demanded a guide to find

Nixon, who (then turning the spit at his brother's, at the Bark-house) cried, "He is coming, he is now on the road for me;" but the astonishment of the family can scarcely be imagined, when on the messenger's arrival he demanded Nixon in the King's name: the people who before scoffed at his simple appearance and odd sayings, and had pointed to the very children to make him their sport, were now confounded, on finding the most ridiculous of all he ever foretold (in their opinion), become a truth, which was vouched to their own eyes. Whilst hurried through the country, Nixon still loudly lamented that he was going to be starved at Court.

He had no sooner arrived there, than the cautious King, willing to make trial of his foreknowledge, devised the following scheme to prove it. Having hid a valuable diamond ring, which he commonly wore, after the most seemingly strict inquiry, made through the palace, whether anyone had seen it; he sent for Nixon, telling him what a loss he had sustained, and that if he could not help him to find it, he had no hopes left. But how much surprised was the King when he got for an answer that old proverb,

He who hideth can find.

On which he declared with a smile, that he

had done this only to try the prophet; but ever after ordered that what he said should be carefully put in writing.

To prevent Nixon's being starved, his Majesty gave orders for him to have the liberty to range through the whole palace, and the kitchen to be his more constant dwelling. Besides which, an officer was appointed to take care that he was neither misused nor affronted by the servants, nor at a loss for any necessary of life. Thus situated, one would have thought want could never have reached him; yet, one day, as the King was going out to his hunting-seat, Nixon ran to him crying, and begged in the most moving terms that he might not be left, for if he was his Majesty would never see him again alive; that he should be starved; that now was the time, and if he was left he must die.

The King, whose thoughts were doubtless fixed on the diversion he was going to, and supposing the matter very unlikely to come to pass, only said it was impossible, and recommended him strongly to the officer's care; but scarcely had the King gone from the palace gate, when the servants mocked and teased Nixon to such a degree, that the officer, to prevent these insults, locked him up in a closet, and suffered no one but himself to

attend on him, thinking that he should prevent this part of his prophecy from coming true: but a message of great importance coming from the King to this very officer, he, in his readiness to obey the royal command, forgot to set poor Nixon at liberty, and though he was but three days absent, when he recollected his prisoner, he found him at his return dead, as he had foretold, of hunger.

Thus evidenced, with what is passed, stands his prophecy in every mouth in Cheshire; yet a greater affront cannot be given than to ask a copy from the families said to be possessed of it. Every means, it is well known, has been used to smother the truth, perplex the curious, and even to abolish the very remembrance that such a one ever existed, but from what reason cannot appear, except that it is foretold that the heir of O— is to meet with some ignominious death at his own gate*, with other family events, which though no person or time being perfectly distinguished, may perhaps occasion this secrecy.

I must also observe, that the cross on Delamere Forest, that is, three steps and the

* A few years ago (since the above was written), Mr. E—, of O—, was killed by a fall from his horse, at his own gate, as he was returning from hunting.

socket in which the cross formerly stood, are now sunk within a few inches of the ground, though all remembered to have seen it within the memory of man, nearly six feet above, the cross itself having been destroyed long since. It is also remarkable, that Headless Cross is mentioned by Merlin, de Rymer, and most other English and Scotch Prophets, as the last place in England on which it is supposed a decisive action will happen: but as to any fixed period, when the things will come to pass, I cannot learn, being all mentioned with the greatest uncertainty.

THE ORIGINAL
PREDICTIONS
OF
ROBERT NIXON,
AS DELIVERED BY HIMSELF,
IN
DOGGREL VERSE:

*Published from an Authentic Manuscript found
amongst the Papers of a Cheshire Gentleman, lately
deceased.*

[FIRST PUBLISHED IN 17—.]

THE ORIGINAL
Predictions of Robert Nixon,

AS DELIVERED BY HIMSELF,

IN

Doggrel Verse:

*Published from an Authentic Manuscript found among the
Papers of a Cheshire Gentleman, lately deceased.*

WHEN a raven shall build in a stone lion's
mouth,
On a church top beside the Grey Forest;
Then shall a King of England be drove from
his crown,
And return no more.

When an eagle shall sit on the top of Vale-
Royal house;
Then shall an heir be born, who shall live to see
great troubles in England.

There shall be a miller named Peter, with two
 heels on one foot, who shall distinguish
 himself bravely, and be knighted by the
 victor :

For foreign nations shall invade England,
 But the invader shall be killed,
 And laid across a horse's back,
 And led in triumph.

A boy shall be born with three thumbs on one
 hand,
 Who shall hold three King's horses,
 Whilst England three times is won and lost in
 one day.

But after this shall be happy days,
 A new set of people of virtuous manners
 Shall live in peace.
 But the wall of Vale-Royal next the pond shall
 be the token of its truth,

For it shall fall:
 If it fall downwards,
 Then shall the church be sunk for ever:
 But if it fall upwards against a hill,
 Then shall the church and honest men live still.
 Under this wall shall be found the bones of
 a British King.

Peckforton mill shall be removed to Luding-
 ton hill, [mill.
 And three days' blood shall turn Nogenhire

But beware of a chance to the Lord of Oulton,
Lest he should be hanged at his own door.

A crow shall sit at the top of Headless Cross,
In the forest so grey,
And drink of the nobles' gentle blood so free,
Twenty hundred horses shall want masters,
Till their girths rot under their bellies.

Thro' our own money and our own men
Shall a dreadful war begin;
Between the sickle and the suck,
All England shall have a pluck;
And be several times forsworn,
And put to their wit's end,
That it shall not be known, whether to reap
their corn,
Bury their dead, or go to the field to fight.

A scarcity of bread-corn.

Foreign nations shall invade England with snow
on their helmets,
And shall bring plague, famine, and murder,
in the skirts of their garments.

A great tax will be granted, but never gathered.

Between a rick and two trees

A famous battle shall be.

London streets shall run with blood,
And at last shall sink,

So that it shall be fulfilled,
 Lincoln was, London is, and York shall be,
 The finest city of the three.

There will be three gates to London of im-
 prisoned men for cowsters.

Then if you have three cows, at the first gate
 sell one, and keep thee at home.

At the second gate sell the other two, and
 keep thee at home.

At the last gate all shall be done.

When Summer in Winter shall come,
 And peace is made at every man's home,
 Then shall be danger of war;
 For though with peace at night the nation ring,
 When men shall rise to war in the morning.

There will be a Winter council, a careful
 Christmas,
 And a bloody Lent.

In those days there shall be hatred and
 bloodshed,

The father against the son, and the son
 against his father;

That one may have a house for lifting the latch
 of the door.

Landlords shall stand

With hat in their hands,

To desire tenants to hold their lands.

Great wars and pressing of soldiers,
But at last clubs and clouted shoes shall carry
the day.

It will be good in these days for a man to sell
his goods and keep close at home.
The forty pounds in hand
Will be better than forty pounds a year in land.
The cock of the North shall be made to flee,
And his feathers shall be plucked for his pride;
That he shall almost curse the day that he
was born.

One asked Nixon where he might be safe in
those days? He answered,
"In God's croft, between the rivers Mersey
and Dee."

Scotland shall stand more or less,
Till it has brought England to a piteous case.

The Scots shall rule England one whole year.

Three years of great wars,
And in all countries great uproars.
The first is terrible, the second worse, but the
third unbearable.

Three great battles:
One at Northumberland Bridge,
One at Cumberland Bridge,
And the other the South side of Trent.

Crows shall drink the blood of many nobles.
 East shall rise against West, and North against
 South.

Then take this for good,
 Nogenhire mill shall run with blood,
 And many shall fly down Wanslow lane.

A man shall come into England,
 But the son of a King crown'd with thorns
 Shall take from him the victory.

Many nobles shall fight,
 But a bastard Duke shall win the day,
 And so, without delay,
 Set England in a right way.

A wolf from the East shall right eagerly come,
 On the South side of Sandford, on a grey
 Monday morn.

Where groves shall grow upon a green,
 Beside green grey they shall flee
 Into rocks, and many die.
 They shall flee into Salt strand,
 And, twenty thousand, without sword, shall die
 each man.

The dark dragon over Sudsbrown,
 Shall bring with him a royal band ;
 But their lives shall be forlorn,
 His head shall be in Stafford town,
 His tail in Ireland.

He shall boldly bring his men, thinking to win
renown ;

Beside a wall in a forest fair he shall be beaten
down.

On Hine's heath they shall begin this bloody
fight,

And with trained steel shall hew each other's
helmet bright :

But who shall win that day no one can tell.

A Duke out of Denmark shall him dight,

On a day in England, and make many a Lord
full low to light,

And the ladies cry, ' Well away,'

And the black fleet with main and might,

Their enemies full boldly there assail.

In Britain's land shall be a knight,

On them shall make a cruel fight.

A bitter boar with main and might

Shall bring a royal rout that day.

There shall die many a worthy knight,

And be driven into the fields green and grey,

They shall lose both field and fight.

The weary eagle shall to an island in the sea
retire,

Where leaves and herbs grow fresh and green,

There shall he meet a lady fair,

Who shall say, ' Go help thy friend in battle
slain.'

Then by the counsel of that fair,
 He eagerly will make to flee
 Twenty-six standard of the enemy.
 A rampant lion in silver set, in armour fair,
 Shall help the eagle in that tide,
 When many a knight shall die.

The bear that hath been long tied to a stake,
 shall shake his chains,
 That every man shall hear, and shall cause
 much debate.

The bull and red rose shall stand in strife,
 That shall turn England to much woe,
 And cause many a man to lose his life.

In a forest stand oaks three,
 Beside a headless cross ;
 A well of blood shall run and ree,
 Its cover shall be brass,
 Which shall ne'er appear,
 Till horses' feet have trod it bare,
 Who wins it will declare.
 The eagle shall so fight that day,
 That ne'er a friend's from him away.
 A hound without delay shall run the chace far
 and near.

The dark dragon shall die in fight.
 A lofty head the bear shall rear,
 The wide wolf so shall light. [fiercely fight.
 The bridled steed against his enemies will

A fleet shall come out of the North,
 Riding on a horse of trees.
 A white hand beareth he,
 And three wreaths so free,
 That day the eagle shall him slay,
 And on a hill set his banner straightway.
 That lion who's forsaken been and forced to
 flee,
 Shall hear a woman shrilly say,
 'Thy friends are killed on yonder hill,'
 Death to many a knight this day.
 With that the lion bears his banner to a hill,
 Within a forest that's so plain,
 Beside a headless cross of stone,
 There shall the eagle die that day,
 And the red lion get renown.
 A great battle shall be fought by crown'd
 kings three;
 One shall die, and a bastard Duke will win the
 day,
 In Sandyford there lies a stone,
 A crown'd king shall lose his head on.
 In those dreadful days, five wicked priests'
 heads shall be sold for a penny,
 Slaughter shall rage to such a degree,
 And infants left by those that are slain,
 That damsels shall with fear and glee,
 Cry, 'Mother, mother, here's a man.'

Between, seven, eight, and nine,
In England wonders shall be seen ;
Between nine and thirteen,
All sorrow shall be done.

Then rise up, Richard, son of Richard,
And bless the happy reign,
Thrice happy he who sees this time to come,
When England shall know rest and peace
again.

PROPHECIES FROM OLD PAMPHLETS.

The famous Cheshire prophet, Nixon, besides his prophecies relative to the fate of private families, also predicted much of public affairs, which we find literally verified by the sequel.

On the Christmas before he went to court, being among the servants at Mr. Cholmondeley's house, to the surprise of them all, he suddenly started up, and said,

"I must prophesy." He went on, "If the favourite* of a king shall be slain, the master's neck shall be cleft in twain. And the men of the North† shall sell precious blood; yea, their own blood. And they shall sacrifice a noble warrior‡ to the idol, and hang up his flesh in the high places; and a storm shall come out of the North, which shall blow down the steeples

* The Duke of Buckingham (favourite of James, and Charles I., who was beheaded), assassinated by J. Felton.

† The Scots, who sold their King, Charles I., for a large sum of money, to the English rebels.

‡ Suppose the Marquis of Montrose.

of the South; and the labourer shall rise above his lord, and the harvest shall in part be trampled down by horses, and the remainder lie waste, to be devoured by birds.

“ When *an oak tree* shall be softer than men’s hearts, then look for better times, but they be but beginning.

“ The departure of a great man’s soul* shall trouble a river hard by, and overthrow trees, houses, and estates. From that part of the house from whence the mischief came, you must look for the cure. First comes joy, then sorrow;—after mirth comes mourning.

“ I see men, women and children, spotted † like beasts, and their nearest and dearest friends affrighted at them. I see towns on fire, and innocent blood shed; but when men and horses walk upon the water, then shall come peace and plenty to the people, but trouble is preparing for Kings; and the *great yellow fruit* ‡ shall come over to this country and flourish; and I see this tree take deep root, and spread into a thousand branches,

* Suppose Oliver Cromwell, at whose death the greatest storm of wind happened that had been known in England.

† The Plague and Fire of London were here very plainly foretold.

‡ The Great Yellow Fruit, suppose the Prince of Orange, King William III.

which shall afterwards be at strife one with another, because of their number ; and there shall come a wind from the South, and the West, which shall shake the tree. I see multitudes of people running to and fro, and talking in a strange tongue. And there shall be a famine* in the midst of great plenty, and earthquakes and storms shall level and purify the earth."

After these sayings, which every one, with the slightest knowledge of our history, will instantly apply to those events which they so wonderfully foretold, Nixon was silent, and relapsed into his wonted stupidity ; from which he did not recover until many weeks after, when he became again inspired, and gave vent to those remarkable predictions which were collected by Mr. Oldmixon. Those which we have just now related, were taken down from the prophet's mouth by the steward, in pursuance of the orders of Mr. Cholmondley himself ; and the original manuscript is now in the hands of a gentleman in Shropshire.

[The Editor presents his readers with a copy of a printed paper, which several aged persons, residing near the forest, have vouched for the authenticity.]

* This was said, in the book from whence these predictions were extracted, to mean oppression of the poor.

A true and particular Account, of a strange and surprising Vision, that was seen on the forest of Delamere, in Cheshire, on the 4th of last Month.

As Nixon, in the reign of Henry VII., prophesied many strange and wonderful things that should come to pass, such as an heir being born to Lord Cholmondley's family, which at that time there was little reason to expect, which came to pass; and also of the eldest son, or young Lord Cholmondley, should have the misfortune to break his neck, by riding a hunting, which accident really did happen, and several other things already come to pass according to the said prophecy; but in particular, of a wonderful battle or engagement, that should be fought on the forest of Delamere, and as it is now fully expected that we shall have an invasion from our natural and inveterate enemies, the French, it is also thought it will be in the North of England; and in all probability the said forest of Delamere may be the place of action, or engagement; and what strengthens the belief more, is the vision that was seen on the said forest on the 4th, as follows:

As two ancient persons were walking over the said forest, to their great surprise, they

saw at a distance before them, an army rise out of the ground, drawn up with their proper officers, and their commanders in front of them; and whilst they were looking at, and ruminating upon so strange a sight, behold, to their wonderful surprise and amazement, there arose also another army out of the ground, a small distance from the first, and farther in the forest, which army was headed or commanded by a man in royal apparel, who, after having drawn up his army, marched to meet and engage the first; upon which a most bloody battle ensued with fire arms, and many appeared to be killed on both sides; but being so near each other, they laid down or grounded their arms, and took to their swords, with which great slaughter was made, and then came to such close quarters that they put up their swords and fought with their hands; all which engagements continued more than three quarters of an hour; during which time the said two ancient people were spectators; and at last the remains of the army that first appeared, retreated towards the sea, and vanished directly out of their sight; whilst the other army, which was commanded by the man in royal apparel, marched victorious out of the field as far as it was possible to see them. These ancient people having

spoken of the above vision, it came to the ears of several gentlemen, who sent for and examined them concerning the truth of it, which they were ready to make oath of.

On the 6th of the same month, as seven men were going to Chester, over the said forest, about the middle of it they saw, to their great astonishment, a vision much resembling that which was seen on the 4th before, as above described, only with this addition, that the victorious army had many slain, to all appearance, yet they resumed life again, and joined their own army; all which is looked upon as a good omen, if in case England is invaded by her enemies, that though the nation be seemingly dead, and in divisions, yet on the approach of the enemy they will have in general one heart and one mind, and exert themselves to repel our most inveterate enemies.

As Nixon's prophecies are by some persons thought fables, yet by what has come to pass, it is now thought, and plainly appears, that most of them have or will prove true; for which reason we have all occasion not only to exert all our might, to repel by force our enemies, but return from our abandoned and wicked course of life, and make our continual prayers to God for our protection and safety.

End of Nixon's Original Prophecies.

A TRUE COPY
OF
THE PROPHECY
OF
WILLIAM NIXON.

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED,
FROM A MANUSCRIPT IN THE POSSESSION
OF
JAS. KENDRICK, Esq., M.D.,
OF
WARRINGTON.

A TRUE COPY

OF THE

Prophecy of William Nixon.

[FROM A MANUSCRIPT IN THE POSSESSION OF
JAMES KENDRICK, ESQ., M.D., OF WARRINGTON.]

William Nixon was born upon White Sunday, at the Bridge End House, in Over Parish, in the reign of Edward IV., 1461; but in the reigns of Richard III. and Henry VII., it hath been told by ancient persons that he foretold strange things, that came to pass in and after his days. He foretold the suppression of the abbeyes, which came to pass in the reign of Henry VIII. As he passed by a great thorn tree in the domain of the Abbey of Vale Royal, he said that thorn tree should be a door to keep beasts out. He said that when the harrow came to the high altar, then it should be demolished; which came to pass, for Abbot

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Harrow was the last abbot, and was put to death by Sir Thomas Holcroft, who was Lord-Marshal to Henry VIII. when he suppressed the abbeyes.

Also he said that the Abbey of Vale Royal should make a raven's nest; which came to pass, for this said Sir Thomas Holcroft gave a raven for his crest, who did build his house of the demolished abbey. Moreover, he said that Norton Abbey and Vale Royal should meet at Acton Bridge; which came to pass, for of the stones of those buildings was that bridge made.

He said that houses should be turned into smithies; which came to pass, for most ancient houses in those days had covers, or funnels, to avoid smoke. He said a time should be that all sorts should have chimneys at their mouths; which has come to pass generally.

He said Darnall Park should be hacked and hewn, and Darnall Pool should run like a lone, and Ridley Pool should be sown and mown; which has come to pass long since.

He said that when a raven should build in a lion's mouth, then a king of England should be driven out of his nation and never return. An heir should be born to Cholmondley's family, and an eagle sit on the top of the house. The heir shall live to see England invaded by foreigners, who shall come as far as Delamere

Forest, in Cheshire—but a miller, named Peter, shall be born, with two heels on one foot, and at that time shall be living in a mill, near Esquire Cholmondley's, and shall be instrumental in delivering the nation. A boy shall be born with three thumbs, and shall hold three king's horses, while England shall three times be lost in one day; the invader shall be killed, and be laid across a horse's back, like a calf. The miller shall knighted be by the victorious prince, and after that England shall see happy days, and a man of valour, virtue, and worth, shall again prosper, as a token of these things. The wall of Esquire Cholmondley's house towards the pool end shall fall, and if it fall downwards, the Church shall be oppressed, but if upwards, against the rising hill on the side of it, the Church shall flourish again. Moreover, he said the bones of a British king shall be found under it.

He said that Northwich should be destroyed by rivers. It is conceived that he did not mean the rivers that run under the bridge. He said there should come a sad time, which should end in bloody wars of some years, which a Royal George should decide, and England should suffer through her own men and her own money. He said that it would be worst with them that have the most, and

best with them that had the least. Landlords should stand, with their hats in their hands, desiring tenants to hold their land. He said there should be a winter's counsel, a careful Christmas, and a bloody Lent, and that there should be such a fearful sad time that a man should think himself happy if he could bid old England adieu.

He said there should be so much bloodshed that a man could have a house for pulling at the latch strings. There would be three gates to London for pressing of men for soldiers. Then if thou have three horses with thee, at the first gate sell one, and keep thee at home; and at the second gate sell the other two, and keep thee at home; at the last gate, busk and boon, for all shall be done before thou come. One asked him where a man should be safe from the villanies of soldiers? He said some would say betwixt Mold and Mersey, but he said in God's croft, and where should that be but between the Mersey and Dee.

He being in Over Townsfields had a vision of the battle that was then between Richard III. and Henry VII., which was in Bosworth Field, in Leicestershire. Information was given to the King, who sent horsemen for him, at which time he was turning a spit in Sutton Grange, now called the Bark House, and there

he said to the folk in the house that there was a man in Over coming for him to fetch him to the King. They all laughed heartily; but when the messenger came into the house and took him away, they were all amazed. When he was brought to the Court the King thought to prove him, and took his signet off his hand, and hid it in the garden, and said: "Nixon, I understand that thou canst tell anything; I have lost a precious jewel—canst thou tell how I shall find it?" To which he straightway said—"He that hideth can find." The King replied—"Art thou such a man?" A nobleman of the Court came to him to know what must be his end. Nixon told him that he should be thrown from his horse upon a stake, and thereupon be killed. The same person disguised himself, and came again. Nixon told him he must be cast off his horse into water and drowned, stung with an adder, and so die. All despised and judged false what he had said to the nobleman, but in a short time these several ends came to pass. When, for a hunting excursion, the King left the Court, Nixon said "I shall be famished to death." The King replied, "Is not my Court able to sustain thee?" The nobleman having locked him up, that no man might discourse with him, he was forgotten, famished to death, and so died. He

told many and several things not recorded then, which came to pass. He said that there was a man in Cornwall knew as much as he, but he was not to disclose it.

When you hear without delay of a parliament holden by a king and queen, then England and Scotland shall rue what follows. There shall be much strife betwixt a man and his wife. Then two men shall seem to hold the crown before where king crowned the Blue Boar with; the rough and ragged staff shall have never a bough nor branch in England left, and Scotland shall stand, both, more and less, till they have brought this land in a woeful case; then the bloody wounds in Scotland shall arise, and in England make an enterprise, and at Berwick-upon-Tweed shall enter in twice. England shall be won and lost at the starting of a horse. Three battles you shall have—first at Northumberland, second at Cumberland Bridge, the third upon the south side of the Trent. Then the Scotch shall proclaim twenty pence per day, the English seventeen pence per day, and all the English shall go to the other side. The Scotch shall govern England for one whole year. The dragons out of Ireland shall come and make war with England for their abomination, so that London shall run with blood, and at the last sink. Then a fight shall be fought by a crowned

king; but a bastard shall win the day, and he shall, without any delay, help England into a very nigh way, which hath and shall go to decay for their sins. Great God's wrath hangs over the heads of the wicked British harlots. Five of their heads shall be sold for a penny. Between seven hundred and nine, wonders in England shall be seen.

Between nine and thirteen all sorrows shall be gone, a wicked woman shall be the cause of blame, which shall stand in the hands of a large black crow; shall come into Britain with him a young knight, whose name shall be George Boever, of the kin of the king, crowned with thorns, and shall be called Cousin to Jesse. A child with a chaplet shall come over the sea with an eagle, so a Royal scion shall have no part except Jesus, which died on Calvary, that suffered His body to be pierced with spears. The red rose and the dragon so fierce shall be, and the draught of bulls with main and might, that he shall be fain to take into a castle made of lime and stone that he shall put most trust to. His flesh shall be torn off him. The cock of the North shall be forced to flee. His feathers shall be plucked on every side, and he shall curse the time that ever he was born. He shall be put down for his pride. The blue bear and the miller in England shall

ride away ; the untrue shall tremble and quake for fear. A child with a chaplet shall invade England for forty-seven days ; the miller shall justice make. Then shall a bear come that hath been long tied to the stake and shake his chains that every man shall hear that hath caused much debate. A dead man shall rise that was buried in sight to make accord, reaching between two men, and which shall put the right heir to his right. Then shall the dead man say : This matter hath staid long in hand. Rise up, Richard, and crown George the heir of Edward. Before this shall be mickle ado. Both the bull and the red rose shall stand in strife ; they shall turn England to woe, and cause many a man to lose his life between Ware and Chester. Many a man lost his life that day. The chief lord pertaining to the same there shall be slain. Then shall a fellowship arise with might and main, and come to Bushberry Heath, and meet at a cross of stone. The raven and miller shall be then slain, and many a knight that never shall go home again.

The red rose and the dragon down, down shall be cast. At Houndsley Heath a new battle shall be ; to Charing Cross a battle shall last and go down from Sutton to Tower Hill. The bull shall light, he and his assistances shall strive to drink their fills at wells that springs

years two or three; from thence he goeth to a great castle, then an eagle will dwell in the eyry of his enemy. Each one shall from their castle go, and sail on the sea, and war on God's enemies two or three. Then of the best in England shall be the bull, and shall die at Jehosaphat, besides Mount Calvary. A Royal George shall procure a peace; but often a peace should prove but a false one, through a change in the state opinions. He saith these would arise, and there would be so much grudging and so much discontent should arise in many endeavours to bring in some ways of the late rebellion upon us. He said there would follow woeful days that should last so many years; and before these fearful times a raven should build her nest upon the water battlement of Over Steeple, and hatch her young ones therein, and Pecfertou Mill should be set on Luddington Hill, and a cave or a tomb shall be discovered on Delamere Forest. He said there should come such a green winter that it shall not be known from summer, but for the want of the leaves of the trees. And he said that when peace is made, at every man's door there shall be the most danger; for although all be at peace over night, there shall be war the next morning, and then shall all jails be filled with great men, and there shall be so much hatred and malice that they

will say, kill thou my landlord and I will kill thine; and the very children shall seek to take away their parents' lives. He said, between sickle and suck all England shall have pluck, and shall be several times forswore and driven to their wits, and be put to three straits, that they shall not know what to do—whether raise their corn, bury their dead, or go to the field to fight. He said that foreign nations should invade England, and come in with snow upon their helmets. He said that there should be a great groat granted, but never gathered; and he said at Yenslow a cock should crow, with four-and-twenty bands of men, and never a captain to lead them up; and at the said cock crow, birds on the bough shall sing, and their best wife shall sing for joy of a little.

There are appointed five battles which shall be fought before this comes to pass, the first at Bramley, another beside the castle cave, the third at Bearer, the fourth beside Troy that is so fair, the fifth at Houndslow Heath shall be stricken the last battle. Although in Germany begins a dance which passes through Italy, Spain, and France, then to Ireland it shall leap, and then go over into Scotland. But England shall pass the pipes. He that will England win, in Ireland he must begin. For England's men and England's money shall

there be one double danger, which shall be the cause, the one shall be the altering of the laws, the other shall be who readeth right the loss of a duke both kind and wight, well away and woeful sorrows, and mischief goes on both even and morrow. Lords and barons a promise will make of God's holy words their parts to take. The tattling pride and prate will cause great slanders and great debate. Happy is he that very time that can bid Old England farewell and adieus. With woeful songs the landlord shall sing, and wives and maids their hands shall wring, and babes at the paps shall die in the street; all kind and kindred shall mourn and weep; alas for woe, what may be saved when this poor island is thus betrayed. Castles and towers and pleasant buildings shall be destroyed and brought to ending care, then it shall come to high and low, and to trust one another no man shall know. He that in bed doth joy over night, the next morning is forced to fight. Then shall arise wars, battles, and no man shall know who shall get the victory for the term of three years shall continue. A duke out of Denmark shall him dight upon a day into England, and make many lords full low to fight. And the ladies cry well away and the black fleet with main and might full bold upon their enemies, they say, in British land shall be a

knight on them shall make a cruel fray, a battle
 bore with main and might shall break a royal
 heart, that day many a worthy knight shall be
 driven into a field of green hay, and shall lose
 both field and fight, and a crowned king shall
 lose his life. Out of a den a wolf shall rise right
 eagerly from the east, and shall come in upon
 the south side—Sudford—upon a Monday morn-
 ing grey. They shall be upon a green, besides
 the green is grey. They shall flee into the last
 stand into the south 20,000, without daunt of
 sword they shall lose their lives each one. The
 drake dragon, as I understand, comes over at
 Sudburn; his tail shall be in Ireland, his head
 at Stafford town; he shall so luckily bring in
 men for the king to win renown. Besides a
 well in a forest fair, it shall be beaten down. On
 Houndslow Heath they shall begin this bloody
 fight, and there with trained steed hew each
 other. Who shall carry the game away no man
 can tell right. The eagle so weary shall be with
 fighting, I ween, he shall betake himself to an
 island where leaves are fresh and green. There
 shall he meet a fair lady, and she shall say
 with a voice so clear, “Go help the men right
 eagerly. Look where they be in battle!” Then
 through consent of that fair lady and them
 of the other side he shall make 26 standards to
 fly. Then a rampant lion, mighty of pride, in silver

set, and in armours fair shall help the eagle at that day, where many worthy knights shall die. In a forest, where there stand oaks three, besides a headless cross, a well of blood shall be covered with brass. On the cover is written : Who shall win England ; which shall not be found till it be trodden bare with horses' feet. The eagle shall so fight that day, to him shall draw his friends so dear, a hound without any delay, shall run the chase both far and near. The dark dragon shall die in the fight, the bear shall hold his hand on high, the bridled steed will against his enemies* fearlessly fight, then shall Nogginshire Mill be turned with blood, that stand below a pleasant ford. Then beware of accidents to the lord of Oulton. A fleet shall come out of the north, riding on a horse of trees, the white hand beareth he, with three wreaths of gold so free, that day the eagle shall him slay, and set his banner on a hill. This lion hath forsaken been, and forced to flee into another land, and there hath lain still till a woman shouts with words so short, and saith to a worthy knight, Thy friends are killed on a hill, death to many a worthy knight. With that the lion rests his banner upon a hill, within a forest that is so plain, besides a headless cross of stone ; then shall the eagle die that day. The red lion

shall get renown, the eagle there shall lose his fame that he hath had this many a day. A crow shall sit on the headless cross and drink of the gentle blood so free, and carry their flesh home to their young ones. As God hath decreed it, so it must be, 20 hundred horses run masterless till their girths rot under their bellies, and never a man to take them up. So ends the prediction of William Nixon.

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The pamphlets issued about Nixon will be found to consist in varying proportions of [a] Prophecy from Lady Cowper's copy, edited by Oldmixon; to which was afterwards added [b] Life by W. E., [c] Life and Prophecies of Robert Nixon of the Bridge House, [d] Original Predictions in Rhyme, [e] Prophecies from Old Pamphlets.

FIRST EDITION.—The Cheshire Prophecy, with Historical and Political Remarks [By John Oldmixon]. London, printed and sold by A. Baldwin in Warwick Lane. Price 3d. [1714.]

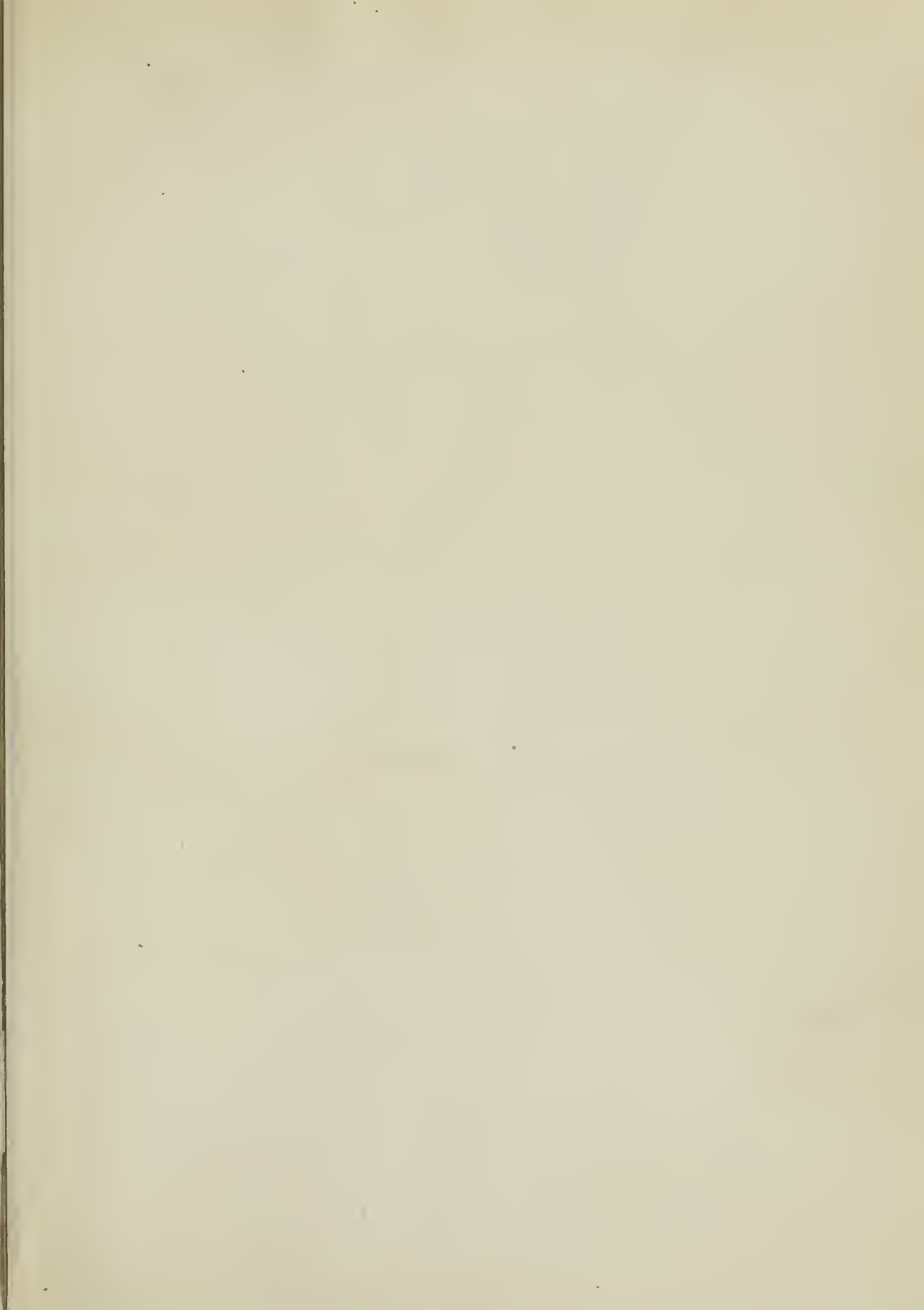
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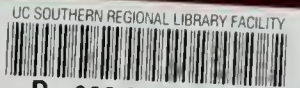
There is a Welsh translation of Nixon—*Prophydoliaeth Nixon wedi ei chyfansoddi ar fcsur ecrdd, gan Joseph John*—no date, but before 1800.

The prophet is also introduced as a character in Mrs. Wilbraham's novel, *For and Against*, London, 1858, 8vo, 2 vols.



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